

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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R 181450Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6001
INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMCONSUL KADUNA
AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 0729

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETEL, BEXP, EAID
SUBJECT: ANGOLA'S NETO SEEKS COMMUNICATIONS LINK WITH NIGERIA

1. MEA ECONOMIC DEPT. OFFICIAL WHO HAS SUPERVISED AGENDA FOR ECONOMIC PORTION OF NETO'S CURRENT DISCUSSIONS WITH FMG IN LAGOS INFORMED ECON COUNSELOR THAT THE ANGOLAN LEADER HAS ASKED FOR NOTHING IN THE WAY OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE GRANTS. WHAT WAS OF PARAMOUNT INTEREST TO HIM, HOWEVER, WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A VIABLE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES EITHER BY SATELLITE OR SUBMARINE CABLE. ANGOLANS AND NIGERIANS STRUCK SYMPATHETIC AGREEMENT DURING DISCUSSIONS IN BEMOANING THE ABYSMAL STATE OF COMMUNICATIONS LINKS BETWEEN AFRICAN NATIONS AND AGREED THAT SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE TO RIGHT THIS SITUATION, AT LEAST BETWEEN ANGOLA AND NIGERIA. NETO'S PROPOSAL IS THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES SHARE THE COSTS AND THE PLANNING IN A JOINT COOPERATIVE EFFORT.

2. COMMENT: NETO IS OF COURSE ON TARGET IN CALLING FOR BETTER COMMUNICATIONS LINKS BETWEEN AFRICAN COUNTRIES. ANGOLA'S STATUS IS PROBABLY WORSE THAN MOST. A JOINT PROJECT
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WITH NIGERIA WOULD IN ADDITION FORGE A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH NIGERIA, ONE THAT TRANSCENDS THE IMPROVEMENT OF MERE TELEPHONE AND RADIO FACILITIES. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE IF AND WHEN HIS PROPOSAL WILL BE ACTED UPON AND HOW THE FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT WILL BE ARRANGED. IF THE CONCEPT IS IMPLEMENTED, IT WILL BE ALSO OF INTEREST---AND REVEALING--TO OBSERVE WHO RECEIVES THE CONTRACTS FOR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, THE WORK

BEING BEYOND THE TECHNICAL CAPABILITY OF EITHER COUNTRY. THE CONTRACT AWARDS SHOULD BE A GOOD INDICATOR OF HOW ECONOMIC REALITIES BLEND WITH POLITICAL THEORIES. IN ITS HURRIED, CONFUSED AND EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE RUSH TO DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM AT HOME, NIGERIA HAS PAID SCANT HEED TO CONNECTING ITSELF TO AFRICAN NEIGHBORS. IF THE ANGOLAN PROPOSAL GOES THROUGH, NIGERIA'S FIRST SIGNIFICANT INTRACONTINENTAL EFFORT IN THE COMMUNICATIONS SECTOR PROMISES TO HAVE AS MANY POLITICAL OVERTONES AS ECONOMIC.

EASUM

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